

TOWN OF DAVIDSON PLANNING BOARD
Inconsistency Statement

PROJECT

Davidson Commons East Hotel: Conditional Master Plan

SUMMARY OF ACTION TAKEN BY BOARD

Vote: 10-0

Description of Action: Planning Board members found the proposal *inconsistent* with adopted plans and policies.

PROPOSAL / REQUEST

The applicant requests a Conditional Master Plan Amendment to develop a commercial hotel on 2.1 acres. The proposed hotel size would be approximately 74,500 square feet, four stories in height, and feature +/- 115 rooms. The proposal includes a pedestrian plaza along Griffith St. and a retail space on the site's northwest corner at the intersection of Griffith St. and Davidson Gateway Dr.

SUMMARY OF PETITION / PROPOSAL

In addition to the programmatic aspects described above, the application includes specific conditions pertaining to: Use; Building Type/Height/Setbacks; Parking (Vehicular and Bicycle); Public Art; Light Pollution Reduction; Pedestrian Improvements (Crosswalks, Mid-Block Crossing, Multi-Use Path); Buffering (Tree Replacement); Plaza Design; Retaining Wall(s); and, Construction Sequencing.

INCONSISTENCY STATEMENT

In the opinion of the Planning Board the proposed Davidson Commons East Hotel Conditional Master Plan is inconsistent with: (a) the Davidson Comprehensive Plan, as adopted by the Board of Commissioners and amended from time to time.

The areas in which Davidson Commons East Hotel Conditional Master Plan is *inconsistent* with the Davidson Comprehensive Plan and all other officially adopted plans are as follows:

- 1. Inconsistent with the Davidson Comprehensive Plan (August 2010):** For more than 20 years the Town of Davidson Planning Department, Planning Board, and Board of Commissioners have contemplated a hotel and conference center to be located upon land closer to Lake Cornelius on Davidson Gateway Drive, next to the Davidson Clinic. The formulating idea was to have the hotel/convention center with close access to I-77 so as to draw citizens and businesses to utilize the convention center as a draw and revenue generator.

This concept has never changed. To permit the hotel currently proposed would abandon the 20+ years of plan work and would likely interfere with a hotel/convention center facing Lake Cornelius in the future.

- 2. Inconsistent three-story difference between hotel, Westside Terrace Neighborhood Homes and Community School of Davidson (CSD):** The buildings in the immediate area of the proposed hotel are 1-2 stories in height, and include CSD (1 story), the Harris Teeter building and surrounding retail businesses (2 stories), Woodie’s Automotive (2 stories), and the 1-story homes in the Westside Terrace neighborhood. The three closest buildings/neighborhood are Woodie’s at 2 stories, and CSD and the Westside Terrace neighborhood homes, each at 1 story in height.

According to a September 25 memo from the Planning Department regarding the proposed hotel, and as it relates to transition or “step-down” from commercial to residential, “This transition typically spans less than two stories in height differential between the commercial building and adjacent residential property.” Thus, the maximum height of the proposed hotel (or other building), abutting the Westside Terrace homes should be only two stories in height.

- 3. Inconsistent - traffic will be significant regardless of what TIA reports:** Regardless of the results of any TIA, the traffic impact will be significant, especially during school arrival time in the morning, at the same time that many hotel guests will be driving to meetings, and hotel check-in in the afternoon at the same time of school dismissal. These conflicts in traffic comings and goings will add to nuisance along Griffith Street.
- 4. Inconsistent - there is inadequate parking proposed:** The parking situation is unacceptable. The Davidson Planning Ordinance requires 149 parking spaces for a 74,500-square foot hotel (2 spaces per 1,000 square feet). The developer proposes 101 spaces for 115 hotel rooms, which is 48 spaces short.

There is simply not enough space for the hotel and necessary parking. The reality is the overall parking needs in this area, with two schools and a busy retail area grounded by Harris Teeter, and the already congested main roadway of Griffith Street.

- 5. Inconsistent with several planning principles.** The Davidson Planning Ordinance (DPO) outlines the Town of Davidson’s planning principles. Specifically, the DPO states that to preserve our high quality of life as the town grows, and to ensure a sustainable future for generations, we must apply these planning principles fairly and comprehensively. The proposed hotel project appears to be inconsistent with the following planning principles:

(1) We must preserve Davidson’s character and sense of community. Citizens have spoken out passionately against the proposed hotel in that it is out of character with the town, given the proposed location beside/across from 2 schools, and it would have a deleterious effect based on the proposed height, lack of significant buffer, and light/noise/odor pollution on the residents of the adjacent Westside Terrace community.

(4) We must use our scarce land resources wisely; specifically, we encourage development that uses green design, energy conservation, and flexible spaces. The developer’s plan does not agree to LEED Certification for the project. Further, the mature trees that would be destroyed to develop the hotel property cannot be replaced 1:1 with smaller trees.

(5) We must create an environment that fosters diversity; specifically, we must preserve our cultural heritage. Citizens from our historical, primarily African American community on the

Westside have voiced their significant concerns regarding the proposed hotel.

(6) We must manage growth so the town can provide public facilities and services apace with development; specifically, make decisions based on the long-term goals of the comprehensive plan rather than a short-term benefit. As described, the traffic and parking issues are significant concerns that would adversely impact the Griffith Street corridor.

- 6. Concern: Negative effect on the watershed.** The Griffith Street area is a "Water Supply Watershed Area" restricting building and the increase of impervious area and high density development. The proposed hotel is within a critical area. This is an issue for adjacent areas to be developed as well as the hotel. No conditional approval should be granted without building restrictions in accordance with Watershed Protection Regulations.

Adopted this 25th day of September, 2017.